

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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S/S:MR. ORTIZ (S/S 7705635)
IO:WMAYNES

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADORS FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, XF

SUBJECT: MY RECENT MIDDLE EAST VISIT

1. PLEASE CONVEY TO YOUR RESPECTIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS IN MY NAME THE FOLLOWING POINTS CONCERNING MY RECENT TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST (AMBASSADOR PICKERING MAY AT HIS DISCRETION CONVEY THE POINTS TO SHARAF AND/OR THE KING). IN DOING SO, EXPRESS MY WARM PERSONAL APPRECIATION FOR THE LONG AND THOUGHTFUL DISCUSSIONS I HAD WITH THE LEADERS IN EACH

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COUNTRY. THESE DISCUSSIONS WERE NOT ONLY EXTREMELY USEFUL TO ME AND TO PRESIDENT CARTER IN ENHANCING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES BUT WERE ALSO A VERY IMPORTANT BEGINNING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS THAT WILL BE SO IMPORTANT AS WE PROCEED TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS. (FOR TEL AVIV: AMBASSADOR DINITZ HAS BEEN GIVEN A THOROUGH BRIEFING AT THIS END, AS YOU KNOW, AND A SEPARATE MESSAGE

TO FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON WILL NOT BE NECESSARY).

2. BEGIN TEXT OF TALKING POINTS:

--THE SECRETARY'S TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST ACHIEVED THE LIMITED BUT IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES THAT HAD BEEN SET FOR IT. WE WANTED VERY MUCH TO CONVEY TO OUR FRIENDS IN THE MIDDLE

EAST THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE ARE APPROACHING THE QUESTION OF A SETTLEMENT, AND WE FEEL THAT THE TRIP SERVED THIS PURPOSE. BEYOND THAT, IT WAS ITSELF THE FIRST STEP IN THE PROCESS LOOKING TOWARD THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS THIS YEAR. AS A RESULT OF THE TRIP, THE SECRETARY REACHED A NUMBER OF TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS WHICH HE HAS CONVEYED TO THE PRESIDENT AND WHICH WILL FORM A BASIS FOR OUR NEXT MOVES IN THIS PROCESS.

--IT EMERGED FROM THE MANY TALKS IN MIDDLE EAST CAPITALS THAT, WHILE ARAB AND ISRAELI CONCEPTS OF PEACE REMAIN QUITE FAR APART, THERE IS A CLEAR DETERMINATION TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO REACH A SETTLEMENT. THE SECRETARY FOUND IN ALL THE GOVERNMENTS DIRECTLY CONCERNED A GREAT DESIRE TO BE RELIEVED OF THE IMMENSE BURDEN OF THEIR DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENTS AND TO DEVOTE THEIR RESOURCES MORE FULLY TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR PEOPLE.

--MORE PARTICULARLY, THERE WAS A CONSENSUS AMONG ALL CONCERNED THAT THEY SHOULD WORK TOWARD RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN THE SECOND HALF OF 1977. IT WAS RECS-
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OGNIZED THAT MUCH GROUNDWORK NEEDS TO BE LAID BEFORE SUCH A CONFERENCE CAN CONVENE WITH ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS, AND THAT IT IS DESIRABLE FOR THE U.S. TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE PROCESS.

--THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED ALSO AGREED THAT, IF THE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS CAN BE RESOLVED, THEY ARE PREPARED TO GO TO GENEVA TO DISCUSS SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS.

--THERE WAS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PRINCIPAL SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ARE THE NATURE OF PEACE, THE WITHDRAWAL/TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS, AND A SETTLEMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM.

--THE PRINCIPAL PROCEDURAL ISSUE THAT MUST BE RESOLVED BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS CAN BEGIN REMAINS THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. THE SECRETARY WAS ENCOURAGED, HOWEVER, BY THE SERIOUSNESS

WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED ARE EXAMINING WAYS TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE AND IN PARTICULAR BY THE EFFORTS UNDERWAY AMONG ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO WORK OUT A COMMON POSITION THAT WILL FACILITATE A SOLUTION.

--AS THE SECRETARY INDICATED DURING HIS TALKS, THE PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTY IN THIS REGARD IS THE PALESTINIAN POSITION,

REFLECTED IN THEIR COVENANT, WHICH DOES NOT ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE SET FORTH IN SC RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 THAT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT MUST AMONG OTHER THINGS RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO LIVE IN PEACE WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES FREE FROM THREATS OR ACTS OF FORCE.

--WE WILL LOOK FORWARD TO FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS AS POSITIONS ON THIS ISSUE EVOLVE.

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--ON THE NATURE OF PEACE, ISRAEL WANTS NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AS A NECESSARY INDICATION THAT THE ARABS ARE GENUINELY PREPARED FOR PEACE. THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, TEND TO LOOK TOWARD AN END OF BELLIGERENCY AS CONSTITUTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE OF PEACE AND AS A SUFFICIENT CONDITION FOR PEACE.

--ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO RETURN SUBSTANTIAL TERRITORY FOR REAL PEACE, AS IT DEFINES PEACE, BUT IT BELIEVES THAT TERRITORY IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN SECURITY. IT THUS CONTINUES TO REFER TO QUOTE DEFENSIBLE BORDERS UNQUOTE AS A CRITERION FOR THE RETURN OF TERRITORY. THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS SAY THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE ON THE PRINCIPLE OF TOTAL WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 LINES. THEY ARE PREPARED, HOWEVER, TO DISCUSS A WHOLE RANGE OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND GUARANTEES.

--ISRAEL OPPOSED A SEPARATE PALESTINIAN STATE. THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS SEEM STILL TO BE EVOLVING THEIR VIEWS AND THERE WAS SOME TALK OF A LINKAGE WITH JORDAN, THOUGH WITHOUT PRECISION.

--NOW THAT THE VISIT IS BEHIND US, WE HAVE CONSIDERED WHAT THE NEXT STEPS SHOULD BE. WE WILL BE RECEIVING THE VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER RABIN MARCH 7-8 AND THE PRESIDENT WILL BE MEETING WITH ARAB LEADERS OVER THE FOLLOWING TWO TO THREE MONTHS. WE WILL MEANWHILE BE KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH ALL OF THE GOVERNMENTS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. WE WOULD HOPE AND EXPECT THAT THE ARAB SIDE WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP ITS POSITIONS, AND WE WILL LOOK FORWARD TO EXCHANGING VIEWS AS THIS PROCESS GOES ON. ON THE ISRAELI SIDE,

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WILL HINDER THE EVOLUTION OF POSITIONS, BUT WE WILL BE PRESSING THE ISRAELIS TO GIVE THE MOST SERIOUS THOUGHT NONETHELESS TO WAYS IN WHICH THEY MIGHT MOVE TO NARROW THE GAP ON KEY ISSUES.

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3. FOR CAIRO: IN MAKING THESE POINTS TO FAHMY, YOU SHOULD ADD THAT I VERY MUCH HOPE THE WHOLE MATTER OF SECURITY

COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT IN MARCH CAN BE KEPT FIRMLY IN HAND SO THAT IT DOES NOT DISRUPT THE PROCESS THAT HAS BEEN SO WELL BEGUN. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO USING THE MONTH OF MARCH TO CARRY FORWARD OUR EXCHANGES OF VIEWS IN PREPARATION FOR THE MOST CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF THE VISITS OF PRESIDENT SADAT AND OTHERS IN APRIL. WE WOULD DEEPLY REGRET IF A DIVISIVE COUNCIL MEETING HAMPERED THIS AND CAST A SHADOW OVER THESE VISITS TO WHICH WE ATTACH SO MUCH IMPORTANCE. MORE SPECIFICALLY, WE WOULD HOPE THE COUNCIL COULD LIMIT ITSELF TO CONSULTATIONS AND TO DEVELOPMENT OF A RATHER NON-SUBSTANTIVE CONSENSUS. GIVEN OUR EXPERIENCE WITH MIDDLE EAST RESOLUTIONS, AND THEIR UNCONTROLLABILITY ONCE THEY ARE INTRODUCED, WE ARE CONCERNED, IF THE COUNCIL WERE TO GO THAT ROUTE, THAT EVEN IF A RESOLUTION STARTED OUT BEING ENTIRELY NON-SUBSTANTIVE, AMENDMENTS WOULD BE ADDED WHICH WOULD AGAIN PUT US IN THE POSITION OF HAVING TO OPPOSE IT. THIS WOULD NOT BE AN AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING FOR THE NEXT IMPORTANT STAGE OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY INVOLVING MEETINGS BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND KEY MIDDLE EAST LEADERS. FINALLY, I WISH TO STATE EMPHATICALLY THAT I WOULD REGARD THE CALLING OF A SPECIAL UNSC MEETING ON SETTLEMENTS AND GULF OF SUEZ DRILLING PROBLEMS (CAIRO 3458) AS RUNNING DIRECTLY COUNTER TO OUR MUTUAL EFFORTS TO REVIVE THE PEACE PROCESS. WE RECOGNIZE EGYPT'S SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT THESE ISSUES. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL NOW TO CONCENTRATE ON THE FOREST RATHER THAN THE TREES, AND TO ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS NOT GET IN THE WAY OF NEGOTIATIONS TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT.

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